

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 14128 031238Z

44

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9999

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: JP, PFOR

SUBJECT: JAPANESE CONCERN ABOUT ASIAN SCENE FOLLOWING
FALL OF INDOCHINA

1. DURING HIS VISIT TO FRANCE IN CONNECTION WITH OECD
MEETING, JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER MIYAZAWA ON MAY 28
GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE OF WHICH AFP REPORTED THE
FOLLOWING: "ASKED ABOUT INDOCHINA, THE JAPANESE MINISTER
FORESAW THAT THE EQUILIBRIUM OF THE PAST MUST DISAPPEAR
WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE U.S. AND 'ONE CAN EXPECT
THAT THE INSTABILITY WILL CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME. BUT
THE LONG TERM PERSPECTIVE WILL ENCOURAGE THE COUNTRIES
OF INDOCHINA TO SEEK THEIR OWN IDENTITY ON THE
CONDITION THAT THE COMMUNIST GREAT POWERS DO NOT EXPORT
REVOLUTION'."

2. IN ONE OF PERIODIC CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFF,
JAPANESE COUNSELLOR KATO YOSHIYA SAID THAT MIYAZAWA HAD
EXPRESSED UNEASINESS ABOUT ASIAN PROBLEMS TO THE FRENCH
FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO WAS VISIBLY SURPRISED. KATO
CONTINUED, THE FRENCH SEEMED TO BELIEVE THAT DESPITE
SOME PUSHING BY KIM IL SUNG, THE GENERAL ASIAN POLITICAL
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PAGE 02 PARIS 14128 031238Z

CLIMATE WOULD BE MUCH MORE FAVORABLE NOW THAT THE

NAGGING PROBLEM OF INDOCHINA HAD BEEN SETTLED. FRENCH SAID THAT THE CHINESE (TENG HSIAO-PING) ALSO THOUGHT THE NEW SITUATION WAS ONE OF STABILITY, BUT THE JAPANESE, ACCORDING TO KATO, STRESSED THEIR BELIEF THAT A WIND OF INSTABILITY WAS NOW BLOWING OVER ASIA WITH COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS PREPARED TO PUSH MUCH HARDER NEARLY ANYWHERE AND CONFIDENCE IN ANY AMERICAN COMMITMENT SEVERELY SHAKEN. KATO SAID THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR ANY GOVERNMENT TO TAKE US PRESIDENTIAL ASSURANCES AT FACE VALUE EVEN WHEN CURRENTLY SUPPORTED BY THE CONGRESS. THE CONGRESS IS CHANGEABLE (AS IS U.S. PUBLIC OPINION) AND CONGRESS HAS NOW SHOWN IT CAN CRIPPLE THE EXECUTIVE. THE COMBINATION OF INCREASED ASIAN COMMUNIST MILITANCY (ENCOURAGED BY AN AGGRESSIVE DRV) AND DECREASED U.S. CREDIBILITY MEANT ANY LACK OF PRC OR USSR RESTRAINT-- PERHAPS STEMMING FROM THEIR RIVALRY -- WOULD UPSET THE PRECARIOUS BALANCE. KATO SAID JAPAN WAS REEXAMINING ITS OWN DEFENSE POLICY IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEED FOR GREATER "SELF-RELIANCE". FURTHER DETERIORATION IN ASIA, PARTICULARLY IN ANY COUNTRY "CLOSER TO HOME" WOULD ACCELERATE THE PROCESS.

3. COMMENT: FRENCH ASIAN EXPERTS HAVE BEEN CAUTIOUS IN ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNIST VICTORIES IN INDOCHINA, BUT FRENCH POLITICIANS HAVE A TENDENCY TO BE POLLYANNISH IN VIEWING THE PROSPECTS FOR ASIA. NO DOUBT THE FRENCH HABIT OF SEEING THE BEST IN DRV AND PRG INTENTIONS IS IN PART MOTIVATED BY THE DESIRE TO RE-ESTABLISH A GREATER FRENCH ROLE IN INDOCHINA. THE FRENCH VIEW THAT THE RESOLUTION OF THE INDOCHINA CONFLICT WILL STABILIZE ASIA IS FOR ORTHODOX GAULLISTS IN PARTICULAR A VINDICATION OF THE GENERAL'S STATEMENT IN HIS PHNOM PENH SPEECH THAT ONLY U.S. INTERVENTION DE-STABILIZED THE ASIAN SCENE. IT WAS THEREFORE VERY USEFUL FOR THE JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER TO STARTLE HIS FRENCH AUDIENCE WITH HIS MORE SOBER VIEW.

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